

HARROW CHILDREN'S CENTRES

POLICY STATEMENT 2008-2011

Guiding Principles for Harrow's Children's Centres

The paramount consideration of Harrow Council's development of Children's Centres is that they are community based and meet the individual needs of local children and families in line with the national core standards for Children's Centres.

Children's Centres will:

- Ensure children reach school ready, willing and able to learn;
- Support parents to maximise children's potential;
- Support diverse communities' own aspirations;
- Support parents to reach their own potential.

Services will be provided in partnership with parents/carers and provide integrated support from other relevant agencies. They will be positioned in every community offering a range of information and integrated services according to local need, including early education and childcare, health and support services including family and parenting support.

Harrow's Children's Centres will link with extended schools to improve outcomes by giving every child the opportunity to develop their potential, spotting any problems early and handling them more effectively in order to assist all children and young people to:

- Be Healthy;
- Stay Safe;
- Enjoy and Achieve;
- Achieve Economic Wellbeing;
- Make a Positive Contribution.

The Centres will be developed through:

Partnering with schools and other services including Adults Services and the Youth Service

Utilizing and developing existing buildings

Using existing organisations and structures to support long term business planning and sustainability

National Sure Start Principles

Harrow's Children Centres will operate in accordance with the National Sure Start Unit's set of key principles:

- Working with parents and children;
- Services for everyone;
- Flexible at the point of delivery;
- Starting very early;
- Respectful and transparent;
- Community driven and professionally co-ordinated;
- Outcome driven.

Harrow's Children's Centres will provide access to the following services for under fives and their families:

- Good quality early learning, integrated with full daycare provision for children
- Good quality teacher input to lead the development of learning within each centre;
- Parental outreach;
- Family support services;
- Local advice and information for parents;
- A base for a childminder network and other training and support for other childcare providers;
- Child and family health services, including antenatal services;
- Support for children and families with special needs;
- Effective links with jobcentre plus, local training providers and further and higher education institutions.

Achievement and Prevention

All centres will operate under a core service umbrella but will also be expected to develop themes of expertise which can be accessed by all families in Harrow with young children.

The core services will be achievement and prevention focused. They will principally be:

- Quality early education integrated with childcare;
- Family support and outreach to parents;
- Child and family health services;
- A base for childminders.

Management

All Harrow's Children's Centres will have a management board which will:

- Steer service delivery and ensure local needs are the driving force for development;
- Monitor standards of practice;
- Provide a connecting base for all agencies to discuss best practice;
- Engage the local community.

All Harrow's Children's Centres will have a leadership and management structure which is fit for purpose and is agreed by all relevant partners

Accessibility

Harrow Council will work towards all Children's Centres being open 50 weeks a year, 7 days a week and 12 hours a day, to ensure that the centres meet the changing needs of the community and promote family life however families choose to lead it. The centres will also be fully compliant with the requirements set out in the Disability Discrimination Act.

Education

We will ensure that all children in Children's Centres have access to pre-school education, to which they are entitled, that meets their needs and that they are encouraged and supported to achieve their learning potential.

Health

All children in Children's Centres will be provided with care that actively promotes their health and supports them and their parents/carers in making healthy choices which enhance their physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Equalities

Harrow Council is committed to openness and equality, treating all children and families with dignity and respect. No child or family will be discriminated against because of their colour, ethnic or national origins, race, gender, sexual orientation and political or religious beliefs. Services will be developed to ensure that minority groups have equal access to Children's Centres.